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PROVISIONAL LIST OF LINGUISTIC FAMILIES,
LANGUAGES, AND DIALECTS OF MEXICO
AND CENTRAL AMERICA

By CYRUS THOMAS

The following list of linguistic families, languages, and dialects of Mexico and Central America is presented with no higher claim to attention than that of a merely tentative basis for future studies. It is in no sense the outcome of original linguistic work, but simply the result of careful examination of existing data. Somewhat similar lists of languages of the same region have been repeatedly compiled, but since those published by Orozco y Berra, in 1864, those in Dr Brinton's *American Race* (1891) are the only ones accompanied by sufficient data—geographical positions and linguistic relations—to be identified with certainty. The list is presented primarily as a basis of comparison, but with the hope that any errors therein which can clearly be shown may be pointed out by students of philology. In this way an approximately correct and acceptable classificatory list may be obtained.

This list includes some languages and dialects of the genuineness of which there is considerable doubt; these are indicated by an interrogation point. Some two or three, where the relation is doubtful, have been included in families to which they are presumed to belong, though the evidence is not conclusive; these are followed by a star. This method has been adopted because explanations could not well be given in the list.

ATHAPASCAN

APACHE.—In northern Mexico, chiefly in Chihuahua, Sonora, and Durango.

TOBOSO.—In northern Mexico, chiefly in Coahuila, Durango, and Chihuahua. (Extinct.)

CARIBBEAN (Modern)

MORENO.—(The only dialect determined.) Along the northern coast of Honduras.

CHIAPANECA

CHIAPANECA.—In Chiapas.

DIRIAN.—In Nicaragua, south side of Lake Managua.

MANGUE.—In Nicaragua, west and north of Lake Managua.

OROTINAN.—In Costa Rica, on the Gulf of Nicoya.

CHIBCHAN

GUATUSO.—In northern Costa Rica, about the Rio Frio.

GUAYMIE.—In Panama, from Chiriqui lagoon to Chagres river.

Dialects: GUAYMIE
MUOI
MURIRE
NORTENO
SABANERO
VALIENTE.

GUETARE.—Extending north and south through central Costa Rica.

Dialects: QUEPO
SURRE?
VOTO (or BOTO).

(The following are usually grouped under the generic or sub-family name, Talamanca:)

BORUCA (or BRUNCA).—In southeastern Costa Rica.

BRIBRI.—In southeastern Costa Rica.

Dialects: CABECAR
CHIRIPO (or TARIACA?)
ESTRELLA
TUCURRIC.

COTO?—On the headwaters of the Rio Grande Terraba, Costa Rica. (Extinct.)

TERRABA.—In southeastern Costa Rica.

Dialect: TIRRIBI.

CHINANTECAN

CHINANTECO.—In Chinantla, northeastern Oaxaca.

COAHUILTECAN

A generic term embracing languages and dialects which are nearly all extinct and their relations unknown. Three only have been determined, as follows:

COMECRUDO.—On the lower Rio Grande.

COTONAME.—On the lower Rio Grande.

PINTO or PAKAWA.—On the lower Rio Grande.

CUNAN

CUNA.—From the Gulf of Uraba and Rio Atrato on the east to the Rio Chagres on the west, Panama.

DORASKEAN

CHALIVA?—On upper Changuinula river, Panama.

CHANGUNA.—Near Bugaba, Panama.

CHUMULU.—Near Caldera, Panama.

DORASQUE.—On the Rio Puan, Panama.

GUALACA.—Near San Francisco de Dolega, Panama.

RAMA.—About Blewfields lagoon, southeastern Nicaragua.

TELUSKIE?—Near the Rio Puan.

HUAVEAN

HUAVE.—On the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, on the Pacific coast.

LENCAN

LENCA.—In Guatemala, Honduras, San Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Dialects: CHALINGA?—In eastern San Salvador.

GUAJIQUERO.—In central Honduras.

INTIBUCAT.—In central Honduras.

OPATORO.—In central Honduras.

PUPULUCA (δ).—On the Rio de la Paz, southeastern Guatemala.

SIMILITON.—In central Honduras.

MATAGALPAN

MATAGALPA.—Chiefly in Matagalpa and Segovia, Nicaragua.

Dialect: CACAOPERA.—At Cacaopera and Lislique in northeastern San Salvador.

MAYAN

ACHIS?—Formerly in western Guatemala. (Extinct.)

AGUACATECA.—In Aguacateca, central Guatemala.

CAKCHIKEL.—In southern Guatemala.

Dialect: PUPULUCA (*a*).—Near Antigua, Guatemala.

CHAÑABAL.—In eastern Chiapas.

CHICOMUCELTECA.—In southern Chiapas.

CHOL.—In eastern Chiapas and northern Guatemala.

CHONTAL (of Tabasco).—In eastern Tabasco.

CHORTI.—In the valley of the Rio Motagua, eastern Guatemala and western Honduras.

CHUHE.—Near Jacaltenango, western Guatemala.

HUASTECA.—On the Rio Panuco, northern Vera Cruz, Mexico.

IXIL.—In central Guatemala.

JACALTECA.—Adjoining the Chuhe, western Guatemala.

KEKCHI.—On the Rio Cahabon, Guatemala.

KICHE.—In southern Guatemala.

MAM.—In western Guatemala.

MAYA.—In Yucatan, Campeche, and northern Guatemala.

Dialects: ITZA (of Peten).—Northern Guatemala.

LACANDON.—On upper Usumacinta river.

MOPAN.—Northern Guatemala and central Belize.

MOTOZINTLECA.—In eastern Chiapas.

POKOMAM.—In southern Guatemala.

POKONCHI.—In central Guatemala.

SUBINHA?—Locality not given, probably eastern Chiapas.

TZENTAL.—In Tabasco and Chiapas.

TZOTZIL.—In northern Chiapas.

TZUTUHIL.—Southern shore of Lake Atitlan, Guatemala.

USPANTECA.—Adjoining the Pokonchi on the west.

NAHUATLAN

ACAXEE.—In the Sierra de Topia, Sinaloa and Durango.

AZTEC.—Chiefly in the valley of Mexico, but extending from Tabasco on the east coast to Sinaloa on the west coast.

Dialects: MEZTITLATECA.—In the sierra of Meztitlan, state of Mexico.

CUITLATECO.—In Guerrero.

TEZCUCAN.—In the valley of Mexico.

CAHITA.—In Sinaloa.

Dialects: MAYO.—On Rio Mayo, Sinaloa.

TEHUECO.—On Rio del Fuerte, Sinaloa.

VACOREGUA.—On Rio del Fuerte, Sinaloa.

YQUI.—On Rio Yaqui, Sinaloa.

CORA.—In Sierra Nayarit, Jalisco.

Dialects: HUICHOLO.—In northeastern Jalisco.

TEPECANO.—In northeastern Jalisco.

NIO.*—On the southern border of the Cahita area. (Extinct.)

NIQUIRAN.—Between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific, Nicaragua.

OPATA.—On the headwaters of Yaqui river, Sonora and Chihuahua.

Dialects: EUDEVE.—In Sonora.

JOVA.—In western Chihuahua.

PIMA.—In Sonora, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa.

Dialects: BAMOA.—In Sinaloa.

POTLAPIGUA.—Along the northeastern border of the Opata area.

PIPIL.—Chiefly on the Pacific coast in Guatemala and San Salvador.

Dialects: ALAGUILAC?—On the Rio Motagua, Guatemala. (Extinct.)

TLASCALTECA.—In San Salvador.

SABAIBO.—Adjoining and related to the Acaxee.

SIGUA.—On Chiriqui lagoon, Costa Rica. (Extinct.)

TARAHUMARI.—In Sonora, Chihuahua, and Durango.

Dialects: GUAZAPARE.—In the southeastern part of the Tarahumari territory.

PACHERA.—In the central part of the Tarahumari territory.

TUBAR.—Near the Guazapare.

VAROGIO.—Near the Guazapare.

TEBACA.—Adjoining and related to the Acaxee.

TEPAHUE.—In Sonora. (Extinct.)

Dialects: CAHUIMETO. (Extinct.)

MACOYAHUV. (Extinct.)

TEPEHUAN.—In Durango.

TLASCALAN.—In Tlascala. (Dialect of the Aztec.)

XIXIME.—Adjoining and related to the Acaxee.

ZOE.*—In Sinaloa. (Extinct.)

Dialect: BAIMAMA.—Adjoining the Zoe. (Extinct.)

OTOMIAN

JONAZ or MECO.—In Guanajuato. (Probably extinct.)

MATLALTZINCO or PIRINDA.—In the states of Mexico and Michoacan.

MAZAHUA.—About the southwestern border of the valley of Mexico.

OTOMI.—Throughout central Mexico.

PAME.—In Queretaro and Guanajuato.

PAYAN

PAYA.—In northeastern Honduras.

SERIAN

GUAYMA.—On the north bank of the lower Rio Guaymas, Sonora. (Extinct.)

SERI.—On Tiburon island and the opposite mainland, Sonora.

TEPOKA.—On the mainland opposite Tiburon island. (Extinct.)

UPANGUAYMA.—Adjoining the Guayma. (Extinct.)

SUBTIABAN

SUBTIABA (or NEGRANDAN).—In the region of the present city of Leon, Nicaragua.

TARASCAN

TARASCO.—In the state of Michoacan.

TEQUISTLATECAN

TEQUISTLATECA (or CHONTAL OF OAXACA).—In Oaxaca, on the Pacific coast.

TOTONACAN

TOTONACA.—In northern Vera Cruz and northeastern Puebla.

Dialects: CHAKHUAXTI.—In the pueblos of Xalpan and Pontepec.

IPAPANA.—?

TATIMOLO.—In Naolingo.

TEPEHUA.—On the Puebla border.

TETIKILHATI.—In the Sierra Alta.

ULVAN¹

Coco.—On Segovia river, which forms the boundary between Honduras and Nicaragua.

CUKRA.—On Blewfields river, Nicaragua.

MELCHORA.—On Rio Rama, Nicaragua.

MICO.—On Blewfields river, Nicaragua.

¹ The list of dialects of this family and the classification as here presented are in part at least unreliable, but are given after Brinton (*American Race*) as the fullest notice that has been published.

PANTASMA.—On upper Segovia river, Nicaragua.

PARRASTAH.—On Blewfields river, Nicaragua.

SIQUIA.—On upper Blewfields river, Nicaragua.

SUBIRONA.—On Segovia river.

TOACA (TOWKA, or TWAKA).—In eastern Nicaragua.

ULVA (WOOLWA, or SMOO).—On Blewfields river, Nicaragua.

XICAQUEAN

XICAQUE (or JICAQUE).—In northern Honduras.

Dialects: XICAQUE OF YORO.—In the Yoro district.

XICAQUE OF PALMAR.—In the northern part of Santa Barbara district.

XINCAN

XINCA.—On Rio de los Esclavos, southeastern Guatemala.

Dialects: JUPILTEPEC, JUTIAPA, and SINACANTAN.—Spoken at pueblos of the same names respectively.

YUMAN?

COCHIMI.—In Lower California.

COCOPA (COCAPA).—At the mouth of the Rio Colorado, Sonora, and Lower California.

GUIACURA.—In Lower California.

PERICU.—In Lower California. (Extinct.)

ZAPOTECAN

AMISHGO.—In Guerrero.

CHATINO.—In the district of Jamiltepec, Oaxaca.

CHOCHO (CHUCHON).—In the district of Coixtlahuaca, Oaxaca.

CUICATECO.—In the district of Cuicatlan, Oaxaca.

MAZATECO.—In the district of Cuicatlan, Oaxaca.

MIXTEC.—In Oaxaca and Guerrero.

POPOLOCA (of Oaxaca).—The same as Chocho.

SALTECO.—In Oaxaca.

TRIKE.—In Tehuantepec.

ZAPATECO.—In Oaxaca.

ZOQUEAN

MIXE.—In Oaxaca and Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

POPOLOCA (of Puebla).—At and in the vicinity of Oluta.

TAPIJULAPAN?—On Rio de la Sierra.

ZOQUE.—In Tabasco, Oaxaca, and Chiapas.

Dialect: CHIMALAPA.

UNCLASSIFIED

CAZCAN.—In Zacatecas and Jalisco. (Extinct.)

Related Dialects: TECUEXE.—In Jalisco. (Extinct.)

TEULE.—In Jalisco. (Extinct.)

CONCHO.—In northern Chihuahua; said by early missionaries to have been Nahuatlán. (Extinct.)

GUACHICHIL.—In Nuevo Leon, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas. (Extinct.)

GUATIJIAGUA.—At Guatijiagua, eastern San Salvador; probably a dialect of the Lenca or Xinca.

IRRITILA.—Chiefly in Durango. (Extinct.)

MUSQUITO.—Along the gulf coast of Nicaragua.

OLIVE.—In southern Tamaulipas. (Extinct.)

PISONE.—See XANAMBRE.

TAMAULIPECO.—Apparently a collective term including various idioms, some unrelated. In Tamaulipas. (Extinct.)

XANAMBRE and PISONE.—In Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon. (Extinct.)

ZACATECO.—In Zacatecas. (Extinct.)

Memoranda

Coahuiltecan is not to be taken as a true linguistic family or stock name, as the Coahuilteca of Orozco y Berra, on which it is based, is in fact geographical, embracing languages of different stocks, but the data are too meager to justify an attempt at classification.

I have concluded it best to drop Brinton's stock name *Changuina*, and substitute therefor *Doraskean* or *Dorasquean*, as

this follows Pinart's classification which precedes that by Brinton, and is based on the name of the chief subtribe.

In the *Lencan* family the Chalinga is based on a few words obtained by Karl Sapper. As these are not sufficient to determine its relation to other dialects of the family, it must be considered as inserted tentatively. It may be possible that the Chontal element, assigned by Dr Brinton¹ to the Lencan stock on the statement of Desire Pector, spoke a different dialect from either of those mentioned in the list, but the evidence is not sufficient to justify inserting the name.

I have assigned *Pupuluca* (*a*) (Mayan family) to the position of a dialect of the Cakchikel. In fact the name should be dropped, as the language is nothing more than the Cakchikel.

Chicomucelteca (Mayan family) is, according to Sapper, a dialect of the Huasteca, but the vocabulary he gives in his *Mittel Amerika* does not make this satisfactorily clear.

Subinha (Mayan family). It is doubtful whether this should be given as a dialect.

Nio (Nahuatl family). This is inserted in this family tentatively as its relations are not definitely known.

Alaguilac (Nahuatl family). I am of the opinion that this was nothing more than simple Pipil; and the same is probably true of *Tlascalteca*.

Zoe (Nahuatl family). The remark under Nio also applies here.

Totonacan (family). The evidence regarding the dialects given under this family name is unsatisfactory, except that relating to the Tepehua. Moreover, there seems to be some doubt, if these are all retained, whether we are to understand that there is in addition a Totonaca (proper).

Ulvan (family). There is still much confusion and uncertainty in regard to the dialects of this family group which I am unable to straighten out with the data at hand.

¹ *American Race*, p. 149.